



# BECOMING A MILITARY DEPENDANT HANDOUT



**Please note that this Information Paper only provides basic information and is not intended to serve as a substitute for personal consultations with a Legal Assistance Attorney.**

A dependant is a person who has a relationship to the military sponsor and is entitled to certain benefits by virtue of that relationship. Certain family members, primarily a spouse, child, stepchild, or legally adopted child, are automatically entitled to dependency status. Other family members may become military dependants under certain conditions and after a special review. Examples include a parent, a parent-in-law, grandparent, grandparent-in-law, grandchild, disabled child over the age of 21, and a brother, sister, niece or nephew for whom the servicemember has legal guardianship. The decision to grant dependency status depends on the servicemember's or spouse's relationship with the individual and their status. What follows is a very general discussion. It is best to speak with a Legal Assistance Attorney regarding specific situations.

To seek dependant status for dependants other than direct dependants such as a spouse or children, you must submit certain documents to Finance. At a minimum, you will need to submit a DD Form 137 and legal documents to support your case for dependency. These documents include your birth certificate, your marriage certificate, adoption decree, a judgment of guardianship and any other documents necessary to make your case for dependency. For a minor, a birth certificate, and original or certified copies of the guardianship or other relevant court documents showing the relationship of the person to the sponsor is required. Children who are disabled prior to turning 21 may be eligible to continue as military dependants based upon physician certification. Children who are full time students may remain military dependants until age 23 provided they have a letter from the school where the child attends.

Certain dependency claims have stringent requirements. For example, dependency status may only be provided for grandparents and grandparents-in-law if the grandparents adopted the sponsor or the sponsor's spouse prior to age 21.

To seek dependant status for an adult family member, you must first send the following documents to DFAS, Indianapolis.

1. Proof (such as copies of cancelled checks) that you provide more than half of the individual's financial support.
2. Completed DD Forms 137 and 137-3, which are available at Finance.

DFAS will send the proposed dependant a questionnaire verifying your information and their desire to become your dependant. The dependant must sign the questionnaire and have his/her signature notarized. You will then receive notice that DFAS is processing your application. If the proposed dependant is approved, you must bring the approval document to your unit PAC and request a DA Form 1172.

You will also be sent to your unit PAC to complete DA Form 1172 to enroll in DEERS and obtain an ID card, if dependency is granted. Your unit PAC should assist you with family travel, command sponsorship and other personnel actions for your new dependant.

For further information or help, contact your PAC or feel free to make an appointment with a Legal Assistance Attorney, DSN 421-4152, Civ 0711-729-4152.

REVIEWED BY: CPT Scott L. Goble

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References:

AR 600-8-14

DOD Financial Management Regulation Chapter 7A, Chapter 26 (specifically 260417).

DD Forms 137-3, 137-4, 137-5, 137-6, 137-7